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ATTITUDE OF INHABITANTS OF SPIS REGION TO REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

STOSUNEK MIESZKAŃCÓW SPISZA DO UCIEKINIERÓW I IMIGRANTÓW

The development of nowadays situation is sufficient evidence indicating that the number of immigrants will increase. Their real amount can be estimated only very difficult. We suppose that the number of people, with a statue of refugee will rise. Their integration into the society is important. The faster this process is, the more economical advantageous it has. The integration of immigrants and refugees into society is influenced by opinions and attitudes of local inhabitants too.

Refugees come to foreign country, not knowing its language and culture. They are often traumatized by events they have gone through. International non-governmental organizations' and state's main role is truly inform about problems refugees and immigrants and in manner to influence positively opinions and attitudes of inhabitants to this group of people.

One of the important factors, which have impact on every person's behaviour are his attitudes demonstrative in his everyday activities. Every person or group of inhabitants adopts their own attitudes to some external problems of society. After revolution 1989 and political changes, attitudes of Slovak inhabitants to certain ethnical group, immigrants and refugees have changed. There is variety of attitudes that depend on many circumstances.

Process of forming attitudes is very complicated and difficult, influenced by whole range of external and internal factors that determine each other. (Gáborová, E., 2003, str.117)

Attitudes and opinions are often unobtrusively learned under effect of environment or are assumed from other „authority“. (Šišková, T., 1998, str. 10).

In our society, the relationship to refugees and immigrants is relatively problematic, but not completely negative. It is rather difficult problem, because 40 years of totalitarian regime have left some impact in the way of people's thinking and behaving. In former Czechoslovakia, isolated from west countries, people were restricted in travelling, they were not able to get to know other nations, cultures and that resulted in their opinions and attitudes to this ethnics. Nowadays we are part of modern Europe, which focus on creating multiethnic society based on tolerance and reciprocal help.



For most people the term „foreigner” is connected with prejudice and distrust. People's attitudes to and opinions about refugees and immigrants were often created without rational justification, logical arguments, based only on incomplete and garbled information. The influence of environment, coverage of significant social personalities and Church have significant role.

Very important factor in creating people's attitude to foreigners is Church and its influence on Christians. It is shown by ideas from message by Jan Paul the II towards the 89th World Refugees and Migrants Day in 2003. „To act solidary is not always simple and it requires lots of training and diverse from attitudes of closure, which becomes in many nowadays societies extended and penetrating“. To be confronted with these phenomena, Church has various educational and training possibilities on all different levels. So I encourage parents and teachers for dissemination positive attitudes against racism and hostility to foreigners. Their attitudes should be based on catholic social civics. Still deeper rooted in Jesus, the Christians have to overcome all inclination to close in each other and have to learn to consider people of other cultures to God's creatures. Only true love, which is rooted in Evangelium is strong enough for helping communities change tolerance to others and really respect their differences“. (L' Osservatore Romano, 3.12. 2002, Trnava 2003).

Democratic society does not reject support to people in misery, but it depends on maturities of society and people who live in. The economic status of the region is also very important. Ordinary citizen fear the loss of social confidence and unknown, that immigrant in their opinion represent.

Arrival of immigrants to new region means their entry to functioning social system. It depends only on responsibility of state to accept and integrate these people to society and protect its own social system against failure.

Up to now, there is no evidence about the massive xenophobia utterances. Number of people integrated into society depends on economical status of country. Public opinion and awareness of citizen to this problem is important in process of integration.

Young people travel and meet new countries, cultures and ethnics. In contrary, the older generation noticed by totalitarian regime, still has some prejudices against foreigners. Through the education and mutual exchange of views and experiences, through the right governmental and non-governmental organisations awareness, we can prevent forming incorrect opinions and prejudices towards the immigrants and refugees.

In this area, mass media, mainly television and press have an important role. „The great influence of mass-media in process of changing attitudes was experimentally verified“. (Gáborová, Ľ., 2003, str. 122). Their main aim is truly awareness about problematic of refugees and migrants, about their difficulties and life situation. Our citizens, mainly older generation live with prejudices that these people bring to us only crime, unknown disease and social distrust.

Practice confirms that changing prejudice and attitudes is not simple. Prejudice and attitudes are stereotypically applied and fixated by repetition. Often these people do not use logical arguments.



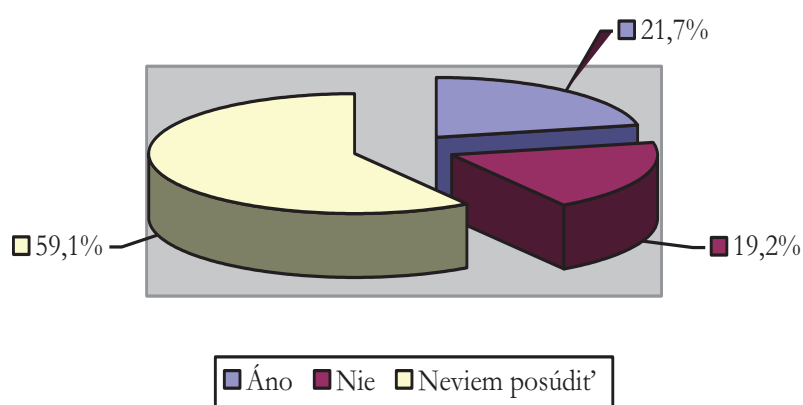
The migration, legal or illegal, is at the beginning of the 21st century still problem. Migrants and refugees became new social phenomenon in our society. As the statistic data show, the number of asylum seekers applications increased, so it is necessary that our society would take an appropriate stand to this phenomenon. One of the factors related to the problematic of asylum seekers is the fact that Slovak republic has joined the EU and from this connection some law duties have resulted.

Another fact is real relationship of citizens towards these social groups and changes connected with it. In this sense, our society has significant reserves.

Research focuses on awareness and tolerance of citizens to foreigners and other similar groups of people. It is known, that number of refugees and immigrants has increased from year to year. This situation is linked to problematic attitudes of domestic citizens to foreigners, illegal immigrants and asylum seekers is rebound of former totalitarian regime and former of nowadays social and economics situation of the most people in our society. Unfavourable sociable relation and unstable economics development of certain regions in Slovakia has necessarily influenced problematic attitudes of people from these regions towards immigrants and their future integration into our society. According to location of certain region, the attitudes can strongly vary. Our research was realized in Spis region and 120 respondents participated on it.

Question whether Slovakia provides appropriate support to immigrants and refugees, 59.1% of respondents answered, that they are not able to consider help to migrants and refugees from state. On the other hand, 21.7% of respondents have answered that state helps equally to these groups of people. More information to this question are illustrated in a graph no.1.

Úroveň pomoci migrantom zo strany štátu



Graph no 1: Support to refugees and migrants

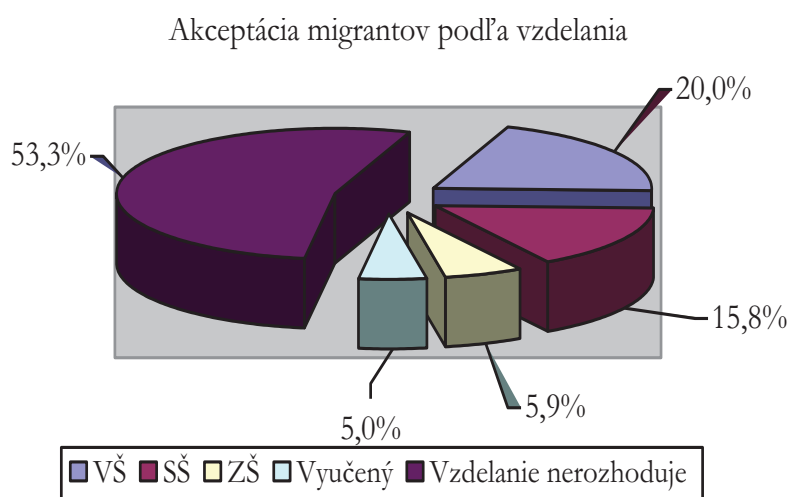


Problem of jobs' threats we investigated in question, which was orientated on problem jobs threat in this region. The respondents saw refugees and migrants in this region as a threat in relation to employment and are worried that their presence in region can increase unemployment, which is already high in this region. It was confirmed by the answers of 61.3% of respondents. More information and details are in table no. 1

	Počet	%
áno	73	61,3
nie	19	16,0
neviem posúdiť	27	22,7
Spolu	119	100,0

Table no. 1: Percent occurrence of threat unemployment

It was proved that more than a half of respondents do not consider the level of education as factor for acceptance. On this fact showed 53.3% of them. 20 % of respondents would accept migrants with higher especially university, college or vocational education. More information and details give notion Graph no. 2.

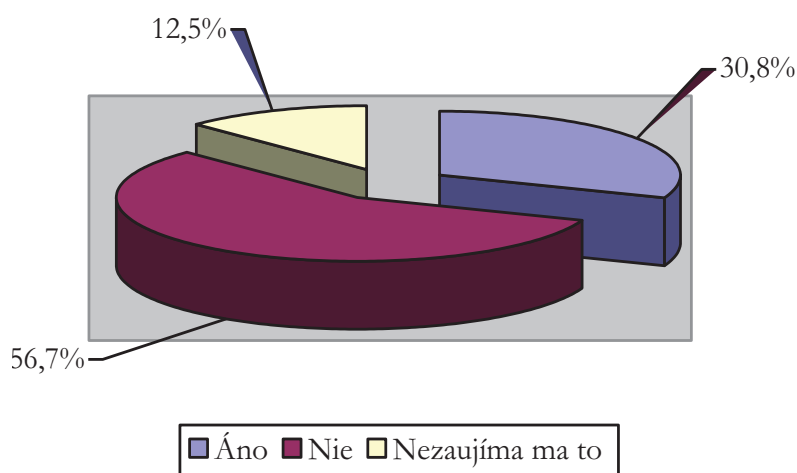


Graph no. 2: Acceptance of migrants according to their education



The answers on the question whether the respondents have any sense about the life conditions of immigrants gave us following information. 30.8% of respondents know about the life conditions. In contrary, 56.7% of respondents do not know anything about the conditions these people live in and the surrounding they came from. 12.5 % of respondents do not care about the life conditions migrants came from. Data gained from this question are in Graph no.3 – Knowledge about life conditions of migrants.

Informovanosť verejnosti o životných podmienkach migrantov



Graph no. 3: Knowledge about life conditions of migrants

The rest of the questions in our questionnaire helped to characterize better the pattern of respondents according to their age, sex, education, religion and place. This data help refine results gained.

The aim of this article is to show immigration as a worldwide problem, which is becoming a problem of our society as well. This problematic is very complex. We live in a society, which cannot close eyes on increasing numbers of migrants. We have to take a stand to this problem and concern with a problematic of taking care about refugees in our region.

One should always remember the fact, that people, society and country are evaluated not by the number of rich, but according to the fact if they want to help people who need their support and refugees definitely are this group of people.

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SUMMARY:**Attitude of inhabitants of Spis Region to refugees and immigrants**

The aim of this s to highlight the attitude of inhabitants towards refugees and immigrants in Spiš region. Refugees come to foreign country not knowing its language and culture. They are often traumatized by events they have gone through. I set attention to create attitudes of regional inhabitants towards immigrants and refugees. Research is focused on inhabitants' awareness and tolerance to this group of people. In conclusion, I indicate forms of helping and possibilities of solving their difficult life situation.

Key words: refugees, immigrants, culture, language, tolerance.

STRESZCZENIE**Stosunek mieszkańców Spisza do uciekinierów i imigrantów**

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie stosunku obywateli Regionu Spiskiego do uciekinierów i imigrantów. Uciekinierzy przyjeżdżają do obcego kraju, nie znając jego kultury ani języka. Często są naznaczeni przez traumę, którą przeżyli. W tekście zwrócono uwagę na powstawanie relacji pomiędzy miejscową ludnością a grupami przybyłych. Poruszono również problematykę tolerancji obywateli miejscowych do tych grup ludzi. W zakończeniu zaprezentowano różne formy pomocy i możliwości rozwiązania trudnej sytuacji życiowej ludzi zmuszonych do opuszczenia swej ojczyzny.

Słowa kluczowe: uciekinierzy, imigranci, kultura, język, tolerancja.

